



Don Coyhis kicks off the Sacred Hoop journey at the Montana Capitol. Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger looks on.

DOC staff changes

A series of changes in the director's office resulted in reassignment of some staff that took effect Oct. 1.

The Investigations and Compliance Monitoring Bureau was divided into two units. Bureau Chief Bill Fleiner will continue to head the Investigations Bureau and report directly to Director Mike Ferriter. The change will allow Fleiner to focus more on investigations, using his

Inside....

PREA Addition.....	3
Dog Days.....	4
Employee Awards.....	8,18
MCA Meet.....	11
OMIS Update.....	19
E-mail Reminder.....	20
VINE Birthday.....	21
Training Times.....	23-26

Sacred Hoop symbolizes hope, healing

By Bob Anez
Communications Director

It is a simple willow branch formed into a circle and covered with colored cloth and decorated with feathers. But it is so much more than that.

It is a vehicle for hope and healing, forgiveness and unity for those in need.

The Sacred Hoop made its journey and carried its message through Montana during August, with stops at four correctional facilities and every tribal community. It began with a ceremony on the front steps of the state Capitol.

Don Coyhis, keeper of the hoop and director of White Bison Inc., kicked off the tour of the state by talking about the message that is carried with the hoop. His message of healing, wellness and sobriety is aimed at American Indians and built upon their culture and history.

"This is not about the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs), IHS (Indian Health Service) or the white man," Coyhis told a small gathering at the Capitol, as the hoop rested on a wooden stand with its 100 eagle feathers fluttering in the breeze. "This is a journey that we must make ourselves. As native people, we stand a chance to do it. We are smart.

"We can do this; this is not an impossible journey," he said.

The Sacred Hoop made stops at Riverside Youth Correctional Facility, Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison and Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility during its 10-day journey in the state.

For Coyhis, his role of keeper of the hoop is both the fulfillment of a vision and a mission in life. Tribal elders told the Mohican in 1999 to craft the hoop and spread its message. So far, he said, the task has involved six journeys and 35,000 miles.

White Bison helps share the message of health and well-

Hoop

FROM Page 1

ness in Indian country through what is called the Wellbriety movement, a program that stresses the need for healthy and sober lifestyles.

But the hoop goes beyond Indians, tribes and reservations. Wrapped in red, white, black and yellow cloth, the hoop symbolizes the common struggle of all races to cope with drugs and alcohol.

For Indians, however, Coyhis said, their heritage is a tool that can help them to break the grip of substance abuse. "The culture is the key; the culture is prevention," he said. "Our culture is stronger than the spirit of meth. It is stronger than the spirit of alcohol."

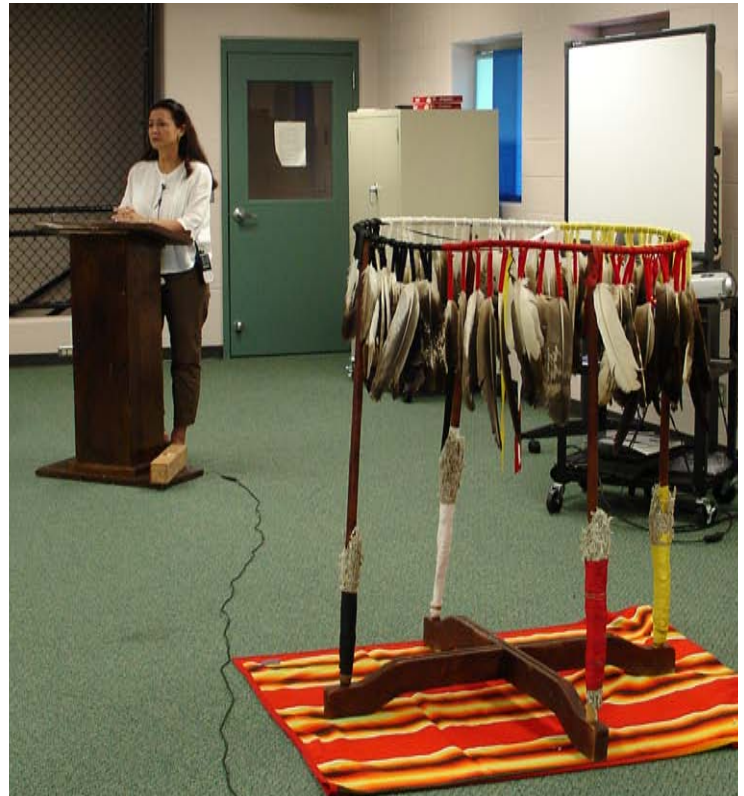
Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger helped commemorate the beginning of the hoop's journey by talking about the significance of its feathers.

"Each feather is wrapped not only with a ribbon, but with a prayer, a prayer of wellness and wholeness rooted in tribal cultures and the mainstream life," he said. "Wellbriety means to be both sober and well. It means to have come through recovery from chemical dependency and alcoholism, and to be a recovered person who is beyond survival to thriving in his or her life and in the life of the community."

Bohlinger noted the hoop journey was the first of its size in any state.



Girls at the Riverside Youth Correctional Facility hold the Sacred Hoop in preparation for a ceremony at the Boulder facility.



Cindy McKenzie, superintendent at the Riverside Youth Correctional Facility, welcomes the Sacred Hoop.

"There is power in one prayer; there is a force of energy not to be denied in the unified prayers of many," he said.

Major Robinson, interim state coordinator of Indian affairs, said rescuing Indians from lives of drug and alcohol abuse is a matter of survival for the tribes. The hoop journey is meant to tell those plagued by addiction that they have support, he said.

"We hope we can be there to help you through those (problems)," he said. "There are those of us who are ready to receive you when you come home. We want you home because without you, we cease to exist."

Beyond the Capitol and the correctional facilities, the hoop made stops at Salish-Kootenai College at Pablo, Blackfeet Community College in Browning, the Little Shell-Chippewa Tribe in Great Falls, Stone Child Community College at Rocky Boy, Fort Belknap Community College, Fork Peck Community College in Poplar, Chief Dull Knife Community College at Lame Deer, and Little Big Horn College in Crow Agency.

'Our culture is stronger than the spirit of meth. It is stronger than the spirit of alcohol.'

Don Coyhis

Sheriff honors public's right to know

By Martin J. Kidston
Helena Independent Record

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following column appeared in the July 29 edition of the Helena Independent Record. It is reprinted here, with permission, because Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Cheryl Liedle is an example for all those in service to the public to follow in addressing the public's right to know.

A small plane emerged from the column of smoke over the Little Wolf Creek fire last Thursday, the day the fire flared up and prompted evacuations.

Standing on an access road, I watched the fire grow larger with a sheriff's deputy and Rocky Infanger, chief of the Wolf Creek Fire Department.

Over their radio, the voice of Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Cheryl Liedle sounded above the drone of an engine. She was in the plane high above, scouting the fire and planning the department's next move.

A few days later, on a boat in the Gates of the Mountains, I ran into Liedle again. The Little Wolf Creek fire had died down, but the Meriwether fire had grown, dancing through the rocky ridgeline just off the river, having its way with the quiet wilderness.

Her voice hoarse from the smoke and her Nomax worn for the season, Liedle watched the fire closely, even as the boat bobbed in the water and the ash rained down. She'd already met with the residents of a nearby subdivision, giving them details on the fire and what they might expect in the coming days.

As a reporter, getting fast and accurate information from local officials is a must, especially in emergencies.

But such information isn't always easy to come by, as some authorities aren't as forthcoming, or perhaps (and

more likely) they just don't understand the urgency of getting a story out, and the public's need to know.

Liedle, however, remains a champion of a public servant. In the years I've known her, she's proven to be the go-to person when information is needed, and needed fast.

When three killers escaped from a prison van near the Burger King on Montana Avenue in 2004, Liedle helped provide up-to-the minute information. When the Lincoln fires erupted in 2003, she provided me access to the fires and evacuees — the same access other officials tried to deny.

Here we are again in the grip of another brutal fire season, and there goes Liedle, out on the front, working the phones, the radios, and mixing with the public. I missed the sheriff by a matter of hours in Augusta, where the Ahorn fire continues to grow.

When a small plane crashed in the Bob Marshal Wilderness late Monday night, she was the first person I called.

"She lets me call her at midnight," said police reporter Angela Brandt "Everywhere I go she's there, even when she doesn't have to be. There's no one else I work with who's that forthcoming and timely."

Environmental reporter Eve Byron put it this way: "What impresses me is how she takes her job so personally. I've only worked with one other sheriff in 20 years who was anywhere near as forthcoming and honest."

While not everyone gets to meet the sheriff, or work with her directly, it's good to know that Lewis and Clark County has such a dedicated public servant, one who lives up to the full meaning of the term.

Helena may only have one sheriff, but I wouldn't mind it a bit if we had two or three more just like her.

Department hires first PREA investigator

Richard Collins, who first worked for the Montana Department of Corrections a decade ago, is the agency's first investigator assigned to the help enforce the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

The New York native works with Megan Bourne, the department's PREA coordinator.

Collins, 32, began working for the department as a relief worker at Riverside Youth Correctional Facility in

1997 before moving to Treasure State Correctional Training Center the following year as a drill instructor. He later worked as a deputy for the Beaverhead County sheriff's office from 2000 to 2005, and then returned to the boot camp as a senior drill instructor.

Collins also was in the U.S. Air Force as a security officer following his graduation from high school.

"I feel that corrections is an ever-changing career field and the creation of this position demonstrates the department's commitment to safeguarding not only our community members, but our offender population as well," Collins said.



Collins
Collins

Crossroads dog program

Retrievers impact inmates

By Eric Newhouse
Tribune Projects Editor

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story was printed in the July 25 edition of the Great Falls Tribune. (www.gftribune.com)

By the time they graduated from the Crossroads Correctional Center this week, four Labrador retrievers had already accomplished half their mission.

"As soon as these puppies came, everyone changed," said Higinio Gonzalez of Billings, who is serving a life sentence for murder. "Even the most hardened criminals got soft like butter," he said.

The dogs have been living in prison cells for the past 18 months with their trainers, learning obedience skills before beginning to learn a service component to help people with disabilities.

On Monday, they demonstrated those skills on a work station designed by inmate Josh Ramirez and built by inmates Amuir Clausell and James Sanchez.

On command, the dogs jumped on boxes, walked down ramps, raced through tunnels and waited to be let into a compartment.

"The ramps simulate wheel-chair ramps, and the door simulates a car door," said Mark Bartosh, the private prison's recreational supervisor. "When we took the dogs out in our personnel vehicles, they were a little confused because they'd never seen cars before in the prison."

He added that a tunnel teaches the dogs to go under things such as tables if they need to.

It was an impressive demonstration, said Lorna

O'Connor, Northwest Puppy Program manager for Canine Companions for Independence, which provided the dogs.

"The average dog we receive can't do these things, so this is really impressive," O'Connor told the inmates.

By Aug. 25, the dogs will be taken to Santa Rosa, Calif., for another six months of advance training.

"There we'll put service skills on them, things like pulling wheelchairs,

opening doors, closing doors or picking things up," O'Connor said.

Graduation also meant losing the dogs the inmates had come to love, but the blow was softened by the arrival of four new puppies.

"That would have been extremely hard," said Carl Craft, who's serving a 30-year sentence for aggravated burglary in Flathead County. "But we've got new puppies in our cells now."

"This is the hardest part of their training, so we thought it was important to have a little overlap with the dogs," O'Connor said.

At the graduation ceremony, Kelley Vantine choked up a little as she described the differences the dogs have made in the attitudes of people behind



Canine Kenny, with inmate Higinio Gonzalez, graduated from the Crossroads Correctional Center in Shelby. (Tribune photos by Stuart S. White)



Amuir Clausell, an inmate at Crossroads Correctional Center, gets a paw-shake from Tamar.

Retrievers

FROM Page 4

the prison walls.

"These dogs have not only changed the inmates' attitudes for the better, they have also changed the attitudes of

staff," she said. "These dogs have a very positive effect on the individuals involved in their care, and it is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye."

Warden Jim MacDonald praised the inmates for the work they did with the dogs, then asked whether it was worth it.

"It's helped me grow," said Ramirez.

"I feel a lot more responsible."

"These dogs are special," said Jeremy Ware. "It's really important to help these dogs go on to a new life."

Gonzalez listened silently, as he rubbed the ears of his blond lab, Ken-ny.

"When I got here, I had a very negative attitude, and I was always getting into trouble," Gon-

zalez said later. "But this dog has made me realize it's good to give back, to help other people."

"He's done a lot for me — I'm a better person because of him," Gonzalez said.

"We had our picture taken, and my mom was so proud of me," he added. "She said she'd never seen me with a smile and a light in my eye."

MacDonald said he has never seen a program be so successful.

"I've never seen a group of dogs so loved, and that's something you've done," he told the inmates. "You've made this program a success, and I'd like to see it grow."

So would O'Connor, who said early results suggest the prison-trained dogs could have a much better than average success rate.

"I'd like to see them take another four puppies," O'Connor said.

"We will!" Vantine instantly replied.



A pup new to the dog-training program at Crossroads Correctional Center and a graduate of the program await the start of the graduation ceremony.

Reprinted with permission

Department's Indian liaison leaves post

Jim Mason has resigned as American Indian liaison for the Department of Corrections, saying he wants to spend more time closer to his family living in Canada.

His resignation in late August came after almost three years in the position. Mason, 60, was the department's third liaison.

Mason said some of the high points during his brief career with the agency include establishing the first sweat lodge at the Montana Women's Prison and overseeing implantation of the natural cultural officer's position that has helped reduce the incarceration rate of Indian offenders in the Great Falls area. He helped make 108 used department computers available to tribal colleges and developed the curriculum for an American Indian customs and culture course taught to non-Indian department employees.

The former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said that course has had a positive impact on helping corrections workers better understand the Indian culture and reduce prejudice.

"Since I've been here, I've not seen any flagrant violations," Mason said. "Right from the director on down,

everyone I have dealt with has been extremely supportive of my efforts."

Mason said he's particularly proud of offering Indian offenders a "stable and responsive person to respond to their needs and concerns."

The Vancouver, B.C., native said he has long had an interest in Indian issues. He worked as assistant loan manager for the Alberta Indian Development Corp., a tribal gaming inspector for the Gila River Indian Community casinos and a security officer for the tribal casinos on the Salt River Indian Reservation in Arizona.

Mason said he decided to resign in order to be closer to his aging parents, who live in Calgary.



Mason

The Davenport View

Everyone is role model at work

By Cynthia Davenport
MSP Human Resource Manager

When my children were very young, I was a stay-at-home mom.

One evening during that time, my husband complained that the kids never picked up their dishes, toys or laundry. I immediately responded, "Joe, where is your cereal bowl?" His reaction was a downward glance to the living room floor and some stammering excuse like, "But I was going to put it away."

"Joe where are your dirty clothes?" I asked next. He followed with a side-long glance through our bedroom door to a spot on the floor next to the bed as he mumbled out a justification for their location.

Finally I inquired, "And Joe, where are your big people toys?" Well, by now he knew he had been caught and so I went in for the kill and with rolling pin in hand, I let him have it, "Joseph Davenport, if you want these kids to do things you have to realize that you are a role model and you need to hold yourself to a higher standard than you are holding them. After all, YOU are the adult."

Well, my charming husband took heed of my warning and promptly be-

gan to put his things away, the problem was that every time he did put something away he would dance down the hall with three little kids behind him swaying his hips, shuffling his feet with a little salsa action, all while doing a King Tut hand jive and singing at the top of his lungs, "I'm a role model, chat ta chat ta chat ta chat ta, I'm a role model, chat ta chat ta chat ta chat ta!"

One Friday, several months and multiple role model parades later, we were planning to check out a new and grand attraction in Deer Lodge. I believe it was the opening of the McDonald's restaurant. Anyway, it was a really big deal for Deer Lodge and the kids were pretty excited and had looked forward to it all week. Marne, James, Jake and I were busy getting ready to go and Joe was on the couch and not moving.



Davenport

As he watched us all get ready, he stated, "I think I am just going to stay home, I'm tired." Three-year-old James looked at his dad sprawled on the couch with a remote in one hand and the other buried in a bag of Doritos, and responded, "Yeah, Dad's going to stay home and be a role model!"

All my multiple efforts (nagging, belly aching, chastising – you know the drill) to make my husband see his failings and a 3-year-old brings him to his knees! We forget, THEY ARE WATCHING!

John Maxwell notes the importance of being a role model and leader no matter where you are in an organization in his book, "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization."

"Most people are very concerned about leading others and often forget about themselves," Maxwell says.

It doesn't matter where we work in corrections, someone is watching: the public, a legislator, offenders, co-workers, or subordinates. We need to continually look inward and assess whether our actions comport with our words. We need to remember who is watching and that, no matter where we are, we are all role models.

McCarthy heads P&P regional office

Dave McCarthy, a 26-year veteran in the corrections field, is the new regional administrator for probation and parole in Missoula. He assumed his new duties Sept. 10.

He replaces Sam Lemaich, who retired earlier this year. Initially, Tom Forsyth, regional administrator in Kalispell, accepted the Missoula job. He later decided to remain in Kalispell.

McCarthy, 50, began his corrections career in 1978 after serving three years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He started as a correctional officer at Montana State Prison,

eventually being promoted to lieutenant. He resigned in 1991 to further his education, earning a bachelor's degree in political science and sociology from the University of Montana in 1994.

"I always planned on returning to corrections as either a warden or a parole officer," McCarthy said.

Armed with his degree, he took a job as drill instructor at the boot camp, which was then called the Swan River

McCarthy

FROM Page 6

Correctional Training Center. But the daily commute from Whitefish to the Swan Valley took its toll and, after 11 months, he became a probation and parole officer in Kalispell in 1994.

McCarthy transferred to the Missoula office five years later, believing it offered more opportunities with an intensive supervision program, prerelease center and regional prison in the community. The move also afforded his wife, Mary Helen Kassel, job opportunities as a licensed addictions counselor.

A native of Connecticut, McCarthy said he became interested in corrections when serving in the Marine Corps on Okinawa in the mid-1970s with Myron Beeson, who is now an associate warden at Montana State Prison. After their discharge, Beeson wrote to his friend about his new job at the prison and that peaked McCarthy's interest.

"I had never heard of Deer Lodge and never been to Montana," McCarthy recalled. "I needed a job. I said I could probably do that."

He came to the state, arrived on a Friday and was working at the prison the following Monday as a correctional officer for \$4.70 an hour.

McCarthy finds his work in probation and parole challenging and interesting. After working in the prison, he said, supervising offenders in the community is not as difficult.

As regional administrator, McCarthy heads a staff of 29 in a region that covers three counties: Missoula, Ravalli and Mineral. The region supervised more than 1,600 offenders in July.



McCarthy



From The Director

Mike Ferriter

It's been a few months now since the hectic legislative session ended, but in many ways this is our busiest time.

Once lawmakers go home, it's our obligation to implement the programs and policies they have authorized in the budget and through other legislation. Our days are full.

We are laying the groundwork for establishing prerelease services in Northwestern Montana, the most-populated region of the state without such services. The community corrections staff talked with community leaders, law enforcement and others about this project and has found a positive response to the plan.

We're looking at a 40-bed center for male offenders in Kalispell and a 20-bed facility for women on the Flathead Reservation in the Polson-Ronan-Pablo area. The latter program would involve the Salish-Kootenai Tribes and offer programs culturally tuned to the needs of native American offenders.

This is an important effort, given the fact that native American offenders account for a disproportionately high number of inmates in Montana prisons.

Also under way is planning for a sexual offender treatment facility with a capacity of about 116 offenders. As with the prerelease centers, this program will be the subject of a request for proposals issued by the department. The potential location of the treatment center will be determined by those responding to that request. The center will improve access to this vital treatment by reducing or eliminating waiting lists for inmate sex offenders.

At Montana State Prison, preparation continues for expansion of the work dorm outside the fenced compound. The addition will more than double the size from 84 beds to 180 beds, and reduce the number of inmates moving in and out of the prison compound each day to participate in work-training programs that help them develop job skills they need when released.

Community corrections has started hiring some of the 36 new probation and parole officers funded by the Legislature

COLUMN, Page 22

Governor's performance award

28 DOC employees honored

By Bob Anez
Communications Director

Twenty-eight Department of Corrections employees were honored in September with the Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance for their work in information technology, juvenile corrections, firearms instruction and tracking escapees.

The annual award was presented to corrections employees and those from other state agencies in a ceremony Sept. 18 in Helena.

Carol Haywood, who staffs the help desk in the Information Technology Bureau, and Cindy McKenzie, superintendent of the Riverside Youth Correctional Facility in Boulder, were individual winners. The special response team at Montana State Prison and the team of probation and parole officers that provides firearms training to other officers also were honored.

The winners were among several nominees named by fellow department employees. Those receiving the award were chosen by the department's management team.

In the nomination form, Haywood was described as having an "exceptional personality."

"Her kindness and understanding when you call ... the IT help desk is top-notch," it read. "She never puts you off, but will research your question for an answer. She responds promptly and with professional courtesy. She makes contacting the help desk a pleasure and lowers your frustration level every time."

McKenzie was cited for her work during her 18 years with the department, particularly in her role as head of the facility for juvenile girls.

"Since becoming superintendent ... in 2001, Cindy has improved programming and care for the young females there," the nomination said. "She has implemented nationally recognized gender-responsive programming and her professionalism and integrity toward staff, youth and the public exhibit the highest standards. Cindy is a servant-leader, performing administrative duties and every necessary task."

The special-response team was honored for its role in capturing two prison escapees in mid-June, shortly after they drove away from Montana State Prison while working on irrigation pipes outside the fence. The two men – William Willcutt and Kelly Frank – were caught in Lake County without incident or injury.

The team of correctional officers was sent to Lake County to assist local law enforcement officers when the two men were spotted in the area.

"These officers are recognized for placing themselves in grave danger by going into the field to search for armed suspects," the nomination said. "The team showed courage and professionalism in placing public safety before their own."

Members of the team were Larry Briggs, Sam Jovanovich, Bryan Kester, Blaine Knadler, Marty Mavrinac, Bruce Miller, Wes Raiha, James Raty, Rob Roe, Raymond Strutzel, Joshua Sweeney, Albert Wheat, Tom Wood and Glen Wyant.

The firearms instructors deal with new officers and those needing certification. The team has provided training for 10 years with no additional pay or benefit. The members initially provided the training and related materials at their own expense.

"The team's skill and expertise were apparent when a parole officer recently had to use deadly force for his own safety," the nomination said. "The team includes officers dedicated to community and officer safety. The team has been recognized by law enforcement officials for its expert instruction."

Team members are Lee Blazer, Emery Brelje, George Clough, Scott Foster, Rita Frost, Chuck Juhnke, Mike Norvelle, Judy Reimann, Melissa Strecker, Bud Walsh, Paul Wild and Tom Woods.



Members of the Montana State Prison special-response team pose with their awards.



Members of the fire-arms training team poses with Gov. Brian Schweitzer, far right, and Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger, far left, after receiving their awards for excellence in performance.



Carol Haywood, who staffs the information technology help desk for the department, shows off her award with Gov. Brian Schweitzer and Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger.



Cindy McKenzie, superintendent at the Riverside Youth Correctional Facility, holds her award standing between Gov. Brian Schweitzer and Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger.



About 300 state government employees and their family members attended the awards ceremony in September.

Database available for research

Corrections professionals looking for help researching the latest technology and legislation have a easy way to find what they need.

The National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center, a component of the National Institute of Justice's Office of Science and Technology, has developed a database to serve that need.

The center bills itself as an "honest broker" offering support, research findings and technological expertise to help state and local law enforcement and corrections personnel perform their duties more safely and efficiently.

One of the recent initiatives launched by the center is the Electronic Monitoring Resource Center, which was created in response to needs by those in the field for access to a central source of quality, authoritative data and technical assistance related to establishing, operating and evaluating electronic monitoring programs.

The operation is a web-based, searchable database that contains documents in the following subject areas:

- Technology, which includes information on both existing and emerging technologies.
- Legislation, which includes proposed and enacted laws from various States on issues related to electronic supervision.
- Procurement, which contains examples of requests for proposals, requests for information, invitations to bid, notice of awards and contracts.
- Program administration, which contains examples of forms, policies, procedures, eligibility criteria, offender contracts, response protocols and workload standards.

- Legal issues, which includes documents related to liability issues and admissibility of electronic supervision data in court.
- Reports and research, which includes published research, studies, surveys, legislative reports, and other documents of interest.

The other main feature of the resource center is a discussion forum that allows electronic-monitoring program

managers, administrators and line staff to easily communicate about issues in areas such as procurement, workload and response protocols.

This resource will allow practitioners to expand their small networks and begin to share information with their colleagues across the country.

Access to the site is limited to active, public-sector

criminal justice professionals. Individuals wishing to participate must first request access and provide contact information before they receive a username and password. To see what type of information is available within the resource center and to request access, visit

<https://emresourcecenter.nlectc.du.edu>.

In addition to this online resource, the technology center also has staff with considerable expertise in offender monitoring available to provide technical assistance to agencies in need. This service, as well as access to EMRC is offered free of charge to criminal justice agencies.

More information can be obtained about the program and the services provided by contacting Joe Russo at 800-416-8086 or jrusso@du.edu.



First crime prevention conference planned in Billings

The Montana Board of Crime Control is hosting the first annual Crime Prevention Conference at MSU-Billings on Oct. 29-31.

The conference is for law enforcement professionals, parents, school officials and anyone interested in crime prevention and safety, including safe school environments. Two

events are expected to be of particular interest to parents, teachers and school administrators. One is a session on Internet safety, which is designed for parents, school officials, and anyone concerned about online dangers. The other session will feature presentations by Michael Dorn, an internationally recognized expert

on campus safety, bullying and weapons detection.

The conference is free and those attending will have an opportunity to participate on a crime prevention steering committee for the state of Montana. Registration can be done online at the MBCC Web site: <http://www.mbcc.mt.gov>.



Gov. Brian Schweitzer opens the Montana Correctional Association convention. At left is MCA President Deb Willis of Billings.



MCA convention

Innovation in spotlight

Gov. Brian Schweitzer opened the annual Montana Correctional Association conference by telling more than 100 participants that his administration is committed to an innovative and progressive corrections system in Montana.

"We want to do corrections right," he said as the gathering opened in Helena in September. "To continue to do what's been done in the past without treating the underlying problems doesn't work. We need to continue to try new avenues."

Schweitzer gave the 2007 Legislature credit for providing the largest-ever budget increase for corrections. He noted the funding puts more focus on programs for treating alcohol and drug abuse and underlying causes of crime.

"We're out in new territory," he said. "We will continue to push for increases in corrections."

Schweitzer urged corrections professionals to provide feedback by letting the administration know what's working and what isn't.

Corrections Department Director Mike Ferriter told the conferees that the governor's comments accurately reflect his focus on corrections and his

desire to have Montana take novel approaches to dealing with offenders.

"He understands the level of commitment that the taxpayers of Montana make" to finance an effective and efficient corrections system, Ferriter said.

He said all of those in corrections work as a team, whether they are in a correctional facility or assigned to Youth Court.

Ferriter recounted the budget highlights from the Legislature, saying most of the increase came in community corrections as part of the agency's effort to manage more offenders outside of prison.

The department received funding to hire additional probation and parole officers, expand the work dorm at Montana State Prison, develop an inpatient sex offender treatment center, maintain substance-abuse counselors in probation and parole offices, continue two new meth treatment centers and a pair of sanction and revocation centers, and maintain re-entry programs for juvenile offenders.

"We finally have a budget we think we can manage without a supplemental (appropriation) and keep the public safe," he said.



Corrections Director Mike Ferriter welcomes MCA conferees. From left: Rae Ann Forseth, MCA treasurer; Steve Ette, Bozeman probation and parole officer and MCA president-elect; Carl Fox, Western Correctional Association president; Deb Willis, Billings, MCA president; Helena Mayor Jim Smith; and Chaplain Russ Tenaw.

Women's prison erects tepee



Volunteers joined staff and inmates at the Montana Women's Prison to erect a tepee for use by American Indian inmates in conducting cultural ceremonies, such as prayer circles. The poles were donated by Bill Snell Jr. from In-Care Network Inc., a therapeutic foster care program for Indian children. The tepee cover was donated by the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council. (Photos courtesy of Montana Women's Prison)

ACA accredits Pine Hills again

By Steve Gibson
Youth Services Administrator

Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility has maintained its status as one of only 65 such programs in the country that is accredited by the American Correctional Association.

At the association's annual meeting in August, the Miles City facility was re-accredited for the fourth time since 1998.

The Youth Services Community Corrections Bureau with the Montana Department of Corrections' Youth Services Division also is accredited by the ACA.

Office

FROM Page 1

law enforcement expertise.

The new unit will include the following functions: compliance monitoring; emergency preparedness, response and planning; safety; and a new risk management program. Risk management will include such issues as workers compensation, liability, property casualty insurance reporting and facility management.

That new unit, yet to be named, will be located in the Health, Planning and Information Services Division. Sharon Smith, the current staff of the compliance monitoring office, will be joined by two additional employees. Those two positions were "donated" by other portions of the department.

Gary Hamel, administrator of the division, will develop a plan for operation of the new unit.

Ted Ward, administrative officer in the director's office, was hired to replace Rob Kersch as the information technology trainer in Human Resources Division. Myrna Omholt-Mason, who has been administrative assistant in the director's office, will replace Ted as executive assistant to the director.

The director's office will share an administrative assistant position with the Legal Services Bureau and she will assume some of Omholt-Mason's duties, including receptionist for the department.

Bob Anez, communications director, will supervise Sally Hilander, the department's victim information specialist. Ward has had that responsibility.

"These changes will allocate resources where they are most needed, place the proper emphasis on crucial department functions, assign employees to areas where they can do their best work, and accomplish all this within existing staffing levels," Ferriter said.

Accreditation for youth correctional facilities requires a 90 percent compliance rate on 399 applicable non-mandatory standards and 100 percent compliance on 31 applicable mandatory standards.

Pine Hills was in compliance with all of the mandatory standards and 95 percent of the non-mandatory standards. Areas covered by the standards include environmental conditions, security, safety and emergency procedures, sanitation and hygiene, health care, mental health services, food services, juvenile rights, social services, academic services, religious programs, training and staff development.

The visiting audit team was composed of up to three trained auditors with correctional backgrounds, one of which specializes in health care. These auditors are always from other states and have no ties to the facility being audited.

The accreditation files and documentation are reviewed, and staff and residents are interviewed during the three-day audit process.

As stated in its report: "The team found that the youth were very open and eager to talk. There was no expression of being abused or mistreated. The youth expressed satis-

'Youth spoke highly of the educational and vocational opportunities offered and expressed satisfaction with the counseling services they received.'

faction with their relationships with staff and that they felt the facility was a safe place.

"Youth spoke highly of the educational and vocational opportunities offered and expressed satisfaction with the counseling services they received," the auditors said. "Youth understood the program including knowing what they must do to move through the incentive system. When asked, youth did not suggest any changes they would make to the program.

"Staff members seemed to understand their job responsibilities, felt as though they performed them well and that Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility is a good place to work," the auditors found. "Staff members appeared to demonstrate a genuine interest in the progress and welfare of the youth at the facility."

The team also observed that the facility is well designed and maintained in a very clean and hygienic manner.

Family Day at Montana Women's Prison

Sept. 15 was Family Day at Montana Women's Prison in Billings. The event offered inmates a chance to socialize with their families. The day featured meals in the prison dining room at tables decorated with centerpieces made by inmates, a clown to help entertain children and volunteers from the community. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Choir, a Billings church group, offered musical entertainment. (Photos courtesy of Montana Women's Prison)



Class prepares inmates for life outside

By Kim Briggeman
The Missoulian

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following appeared in the Sept. 23 Missoulian.

Inside prison walls, on a day that seemed to spit rain out of spite, the topic was saving.

"I don't make much in here, but right now I have \$73.31. Exactly. To the penny," Jafet Torres told Kathy Haugland's crowded Life Skills classroom.

Torres, 19, sat in a corner, but he had the rapt attention of a dozen older inmates.

Seventy-three dollars and thirty-one cents doesn't sound like much, he said, but it's a big deal to Torres. Until he got to the Montana State Prison, what money he saved was gone the next weekend or

at the next party, he said. Even inside, most of the pittances he earned at menial jobs he blew at the commissary on honey buns, candy bars and pop.

"At first it was hard. It was really hard," said Torres, a native of Mexico. "But I disciplined myself because I wanted to save up for a TV. That's what I'm going to do. And I'm 30 bucks short."

He looked around beseechingly, at men twice his age and more. The room erupted into a chorus of hoots and catcalls at the unabashed solicitation. Torres laughed, too.

"Torres - unbelievable," Kathy

Haugland said later, after her afternoon class had trooped back to their cells. "He came in and he was just a tough kid. Now he's teaching the older guys how to save their money. And he got his GED about a month ago."

Haugland, who launched the Life Skills program last fall, could look around at the just-vacated computers

about the program. I mean, they just praise it and Kathy for the way she teaches it."

Sullen loners won't make it through, Haugland said. They're transformed by a heavy dose of positive attitude and the frightening prospect of an Excel spreadsheet.

"In prison, there's not a lot of places where you can help somebody else," Haugland said. "Here, it's expected. You're not going to make it through the program if you're not reaching out to other people and letting people help you."

"Islands connect in here. Frequently."

It's a sight to see, those connections. One of Haugland's early students, Dan Cain, came back to class one day last week to talk to a reporter about the program.

"Are you taking those notes in shorthand?" he asked, and he held up his arms. Each ended in a stub above the elbow.

"That's how I take all my notes," Cain said, to another round of laughter.

Cain, 45, was born that way, and minus one leg to boot. Yet he was one of the best keyboarders she's taught, said Haugland. He rebuilds motorcycles and rips down stereotypes.

"What he's accomplished is so amazing. It's good for the other guys because a lot of them aren't real comfortable around handicapped people," she said.

Cain is a leading contender for a



Standing in front of fellow inmates in the life skills class at Montana State Prison, from left, Drew Paige, Andrew Wachtman and JoVon Johnson, give a personal banking presentation.
(Photo by Tom Bauer, Missoulian)

in her classroom in the prison's Low Support Building and tell a similar tale for each of their inmate-students.

Tattooed and goateed, rapists and drug dealers, bookwormish and bespectacled, black men and white, pushing 300 pounds and, like Torres, pulling 150 - Haugland's class represents what's bad about society, and what seems to be working like magic inside these walls.

"I talk to all the classes and I get input from all the inmates who go through it, the good things they find, the bad things they find," said associate warden Leonard Mihelich. "I can't get them to say anything bad

Class

FROM Page 15

job as one of Haugland's mentors. Two or three former standouts in the course are hired to help in the classroom. Haugland stands to lose her current mentors - Mark Cook, Matthew Hoffman and Chris Westom - to parole or release in October.

"I've known the prison life for 17 years now," said Westom, who's 38. "In 17 years, this is the best prison program I've ever seen for the inmates. Ever."

The Deer Lodge prison has addressed similar needs in various ways over the years, Mihelich said. Outgoing inmates were once coached by a job placement officer, and today a dedicated volunteer group conducts a faith-based re-entry program that lasts a week at a time. Mihelich said that's very successful as well, as measured by its low recidivism rate.

"There's kind of a big swing around the country for these life skills

'I've known the prison life for 17 years now. In 17 years, this is the best prison program I've ever seen for the inmates. Ever.'

Inmate Chris Westom

programs," he said. "I think correctional facilities all realize that the more you put into these guys before you let them out, the less chance you're going to have to get them back.

"That becomes a dollar issue. The fewer you get back, the less it costs the taxpayers."

At Deer Lodge, the concept was developed several years ago for high-security inmates. But a substantial grant of \$170,000 fell through, explained Erik Wilkerson, Haugland's supervisor and director of education and habilitative services.

That wasn't the death knell, though. Last year, administrators decided to use existing staff to launch the program for the low-security end, and he knew just the person to lead it.

"I basically passed it right to Kathy," Wilkerson said. "She's got more energy than she knows what to do with, and she was a good person to lead it. I figured she would jump right into it headfirst, and she did."

Haugland taught in a one-room school in Gold Creek before joining the prison staff. She was working in the self-study arm of Wilkerson's department, helping convicts in maximum-security units and others get their General Education Development degrees.

"That made it really easy when I took the program over to start interviewing people, because I could just walk up and ask them what they needed and they were comfortable talking to me about it," Haugland said.

She and two inmate-helpers interviewed some 150 prisoners.

"We were looking at inmates who had gotten out, failed and come back," Wilkerson said. "What was it they were lacking? What was it that we could hopefully provide? What tools?"

Out of those discussions, Haugland culled a curriculum focusing on a "can-do" attitude, basic computer skills, job interview etiquette and applications, time management, personal finance, and setting and obtaining goals. In three weeks, she was ready to roll.

She started with a nine-week course, but added a week as the repertoire expanded. The budget is shoestring, but there's a waiting list of more than 60 inmates, and room for only 18.

Top priority goes to low-security

inmates who are due to be released or paroled soon. It helps to have a modicum of skills going in, said Wilkerson, though it doesn't disqualify a man if he doesn't. Haugland screens applicants to make sure they'll take the class for the right reasons. Not everyone passes, and two who didn't

'Kathy operates on the theory that if you're not doing it in your life today, you probably won't be doing it out there.'

Inmate Mark Cook

"obviously weren't taking it seriously," she said.

When the current classes graduate on Oct. 12, six dozen prisoners will have completed the course. Of those, 20 have left prison in the past nine months. Not one has returned, a recidivism rate to which Haugland points proudly.

Her ex-students have spread out from New Jersey to New Mexico. "Many have called back to the office and have reported that their life is on the right path and they have jobs," she said.

Any of the current students can tell you how they'll fit into the outside world. An early lesson is a goal sheet they all filled out, asking each student to write not only what he wants to achieve, but how they'll go about doing it.

Jay Blair, 42, will start an automotive shop. He's got a drawing

Class

FROM Page 16

and a detailed parts list of the 1934 Ford coupe he's going to build.

"My shop is going to give away a car every month to a family that needs it and can't afford it," vowed the burly Blair. "I'm going to go from bumper to bumper, tire to tire, tie rod to tie rod, rear end to front end, and I'm going to give it to them."

Andrew Wachtman, 25, started sketching when he was in the Wyoming State Prison and found he had a knack for it.

"Recently I started to use my talent toward my future," he said.

Haugland and her aides helped Wachtman put together a portfolio, which he sent to a design shop in Billings. Upon the shop manager's advice, he's diversifying his drawings and will soon be sending them to other places. He hopes to start out working for a shirt shop and end up owning one.

Besides the Life Skills class, Wachtman has passed five of the six tests for his GED and hoped to nail the last one on Thursday. And he's in the fifth week of an alcohol disease study program, a load that's usually frowned upon.

"Kathy and the others fought so I could take all three classes at the same time," said Wachtman, who postponed a parole hearing for two months so he could finish them.

Steve Ross is a bad dude. Certainly his victims would agree.

He's been locked up the past 3½ years, the last nine months in Deer Lodge. Auto theft. Criminal endangerment. Drugs. Statutory rape.



Haugland

"Those are the felonies," the 29-year-old man from Billings said, not at all proudly. "I've got about 15 misdemeanors, too."

When Ross sat down in the class to build the first resume of his life, he figured his rap sheet would outstrip his list of skills. What he produced, with guidance, was "one of the best resumes you'll see," one of his mentors said.

His past work experience is in the food business, and Ross wants to run his own restaurant some day. But when the class went through a competitive mock

interview process, it was for a construction job, something for which he has little expertise. He won anyway.

"Kathy's always talking about transferable skills and I found out I had some of those," Ross said. He can work hard, he's dependable, he knows how to think on his feet. Now he knows his future isn't limited to the restaurant industry.

"I can go out somewhere else and get a job if I wanted to," he said.

It's a confidence that just might save him from a return ticket to Deer Lodge.

"A lot of the criminal cycle starts with bad finances, because when a criminal or an addict gets in trouble with finances ... they get in a panic mode," Ross said.

Now he knows that, with the money he's saving up and a better sense for his job prospects, there'll be time to get on his feet without resorting to criminal means.

Maybe the most notable trait of the current and former students is their ability to articulate the positive vibes they've gotten from the class, and their devotion to Haugland.

They speak of camaraderie, confidence and connections that they believe are life-changing.

"Kathy operates on the theory that if you're not doing it in your life today, you probably won't be doing it out there," said Cook.

"Taking (other) treatments here lets me know why I'm in here," Hoffman said. "This class kind of gives me the opportunity to stay out and stay focused."

"The class reminded me of who I used to be and who I could be," said 36-year-old Jerome Morgan of Jacksonville, Fla., a former student. "It reminded me of the things I can achieve, of the things that were stolen from me that I allowed myself to be robbed of: my passions, my dreams, my talents, my emotions, my family."

For so many of his years in prison, Westom said he "didn't have the attitude or the mentality or the maturity to want anything different in my life.

"Here I sit today, learning how to give to somebody else without expectations of a reward. My life has changed."

Reprinted with permission

'Kathy's always talking about transferable skills and I found out I had some of those.'

Inmate Steve Ross

MCA honors DOC employees

The Montana Correctional Association honored several Department of Corrections employees during the organization's annual training conference in Helena.

Steve Gibson, administrator of the Youth Services Division, is the first to receive the John Paradis Lifetime Achievement Award. This award was established in 2005 to recognize individuals having at least 10 years of service to corrections and demonstrating honor, commitment, influence, devotion and achievement in improving and advancing correctional practices in Montana.



Gibson

Gibson, 55, has worked in corrections and human services for 33 years. He has headed the Youth Services Division since 2001. Before that, he was superintendent of Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility for 10 years.

Gibson was regional administrator of the Family Resource Specialists and Child Protection Unit in the now-defunct Department of Family Services.

He also worked as director of a group home in Missoula, and maintenance supervisor, cottage attendant and correctional officer at Pine Hills. Gibson began his career as a counselor at a juvenile detention center in Minnesota in 1974.

He has been a member of the National Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, American Correctional Association Board of Governors, the National Standards Committee for the Prison Rape Elimination Act and the ACA standards committee.

Ross Swanson, deputy warden at Montana State Prison, received the adult institutions employee award and Security Maj. Tom Wood was honored as correctional employee of the year.



Swanson

The winners were selected based on their significant contribution to the Montana correctional system, their attitude toward the public and fellow employees, a consistent work ethic and their habit of performing service above and beyond their normal work duties.

The nomination document for Swanson described him as "a dedicated corrections professional."

"He has vast knowledge of the system and is responsible for turning the MCE (Montana Correctional Enterprises) program into a self-sustaining program over a decade ago and can be credited with the creation of numerous programs

throughout the adult secure care system," it said. "You will not find anyone more passionate about their work than Ross. He, without question, puts in more hours than anyone in the Department of Corrections. He has chaired more committees and taken on more special projects than any three people in the department.

"What is most impressive about Ross Swanson is his ability to get things done," the nomination read. "His commitment and passion for what he does enables him to not only accomplish tasks but to do so in a timely manner."

Wood's nomination document said he takes pride in Montana State Prison.

"With security the No. 1 concern of every staff member at Montana State Prison, his plate is always over-full," it said. "His supervision responsibilities include: the mail room, the key control shop, the tool control shop, the inner-perimeter security team, the special-response team, shift commanders, the emergency preparedness lieutenant, the security threat group lieutenant, the field training program sergeant, and the property and visiting officers.

"His daily demands involve every aspect of managing a secure facility," the nomination said. "Maj. Wood is praised for his leadership. All of his decisions are based on a firm belief that there are no shortcuts for security issues."

Nominees for all the awards were considered for the correctional employee of the year honor.

Other department employees receiving MCA awards were Chris Evans, adult probation and parole officer of the year, and Raelene Tuszynski, administrative support services person of the year.

Evans, who works in Bozeman, was cited for his tactical skills, field work and for the help he offers to others who are approaching a high-risk encounter.

Tuszynski, who works in the Helena probation and parole office, was recognized for years of exceptional service and innovation, her efforts in dealing with offenders, coordinating the department's quick-check system for probation and parole staff over the years.

Ron Brinkman, transportation and drug court officer at the Cascade County Juvenile Detention Center in Great Falls, was honored as juvenile institution employee of the year. Rob Kersch, computer systems analyst at Montana State Prison, was cited for his "significant contribution" to corrections. Sharon Smith, compliance monitoring and safety specialist in central office, received the award for administrative employee of the year.



Wood

Offender tracking system project

March start for OMIS

By Anita Pisarsky
OMIS Project Manager

OMIS, the modern offender management information system being developed by the Department of Corrections staff, is expected to operational by March 3, 2008.

The information technology staff, despite the departure of some key members, is nearing completion of the first phase of the ARGO project, which is the name given to the elaborate effort to adapt a multistate offender tracking program to Montana's needs.

Once operating, the new system will make retrieval of information about offenders easier and more efficient. It also will make data analysis easier, a need that grows as the demand for more information about the corrections system increases.

Some staff is working diligently to get the application ready for use, while others are making sure it is working properly. By the end of the year, the staff expects to have completed all the data conversion from the existing offender tracking programs and will have ensured that the switch to the new sys-

tem will work when the time comes.

During January and February, department employees needing to use the program will take the system for a test drive and provide comments on how it works. Training materials will be developed and training of department users will get under way.

Ted Ward, who recently transferred from the director's office to the Training Bureau, will be responsible for training staff on use of the new system.

The department has been working toward this point since 2002 when the program was used only in Utah and Alaska. The National Consortium of Offender Management was established in 2003 and assumed ownership of the source code for the program. The membership includes Montana and 12 other states: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, New Mex-



Pisarsky

ico, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Utah.

All states participating states share in the improvements that each state makes in the program. The 13 states collectively have spent more than \$15 million to develop the application. Idaho has spent more than \$1 million implementing it there and is not finished.

The department has adapted Idaho's product to the needs here. That includes translating the programming language that Idaho used to what is used in Montana and modifying it to the business needs of the agency.

After several unsuccessful attempts to get funding for adapting and implementing the program in Montana, the department decided to tackle the job with existing personnel and budget. Work has been under way for 2½ years.

Some features already are working on the OMIS test site. Information on an offender's court cases, current offenses and location can be found. The new program will replace the old offender tracking programs known as ACIS/Pro-Files.

Hospital staff raising money for chapel

Montana State Hospital employees have raised \$40,000 so far to establish a chapel for the hospital at Warm Springs.

The project was authorized by the 2005 Legislature, which agreed to allow the use of up to \$350,000 from private sources to construct a chapel that would allow hospital patients and their families a place for spiritual reflection and counseling. No tax dollars will be used to finance the project.

Currently, worship services are conducted in classrooms, dining halls and small conference rooms around the campus. But the rooms are used for other purposes as

well and the atmosphere does not provide an appropriate "prayerful space," says Patti Jacques, a hospital employee heading the volunteer fund-raising effort.

"Montana State Hospital staff recognizes the important role of faith and hope in recovery from mental illness," Jacques said.

The hospital has about 200 patients with various mental illnesses.

More information is available by calling Jacques or Cristi Boyd at 693-7024 or 431-3245. Donations can be sent to the MSH Chapel Project, PO Box 300, Warm Springs, MT 59756. Donations are tax deductible.

IT reminder: E-mail system no personal toy

By John Daugherty

Information and Business Technology Bureau Chief

In the world of business and government, e-mails have become as commonplace as phone calls. More and more each year, it seems that e-mails have taken the place of conversation, over the phone or in person.

But with such dependence on this technology comes the potential for abuse.

State employees have a moral obligation to use government resources – in this case, computers – to do the work Montana citizens pay them to do. Employees must remember that using the state e-mail system to send copies of cartoons, jokes, pictures and racially and sexually offensive items violates both Department of Corrections and state government policies. So does using the e-mail system for personal business or as a personal chat room where conversations are carried on back and forth through a series of e-mail messages.

The department's policy is very clear. Among the prohibited uses of state computer resources is: "Using state computer resources to create, access, download, or disperse derogatory, racially offensive, sexually offensive, harassing, threatening or discriminatory materials."

The policy also warns against "knowingly transferring or allowing to be transferred to, from or within the agency, textual or graphical material commonly considered to be child pornography or obscene"

This is not a minor issue. Ignoring that policy can cost an employee his or her job.

The department policy offers plenty of guidance and cautions about use of e-mail. Employees should review this information periodically. Here's a few reminders:

- "In drafting and sending e-mail messages, employees should not include anything they are not prepared for the public to read. Statements can potentially become a basis for litigation, e.g., sexual harassment comments, and/or liability, e.g.,

statements contrary to the interests of the state government.

- "Employees do not have a right of privacy in any IT resources. The department or ITSD staff may periodically monitor, audit, and review e-mail and other IT resource transmissions at any time. Department of Administration personnel may also monitor e-mail.
- "E-mail is an extension of the workplace, and abusive or inappropriate e-mail will subject an employee to the department's disciplinary policies Employees may not transmit any sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons. Department employees may not use e-mail for any communications containing racial or ethnic slurs or epithets or anything that might be construed as harassment or offensive to others based on race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other classifications protected by state and federal law."



The point is that e-mail at work is for work, using it for purposes banned by policy can have dire consequences and the information technology staff can recover e-mails even after they seemingly have been deleted.

Employees should keep in mind that e-mails are considered public records and, therefore, can be obtained by the news media and made public. A good rule of thumb is for employees to never send or forward an e-mail that they would not want to see splashed across the

front page of the newspaper or the TV screen with their name attached to it.

Every department employee has the responsibility to maintain and enhance the public image of state government and the Department of Corrections. What one employee does often reflects on everyone. When behavior is good, everyone benefits. When behavior is bad, all can be tarnished.

Maintaining professional and business-like communication practices should be part of every employee's mindset.

If an employee receives an inappropriate e-mail, it should be deleted immediately and not forwarded to other e-mail users. Employees should advise the sending party not to send similar items in the future. Employees aware of inappropriate e-mail usage by other staff have an obligation to report these violations to their immediate supervisor.

E-mail is a valuable tool that saves time and money. But it must be used appropriately.

VINE: Decade of service

By Sally K. Hilander
Victim Information Specialist

When Mary Byron's ex-boyfriend shot her to death in Louisville, Ky., on her 21st birthday, she left behind a stunned and grieving family, an outraged community and a legacy that would one day benefit thousands of crime victims in Montana.

It was December 1993. Mary's former boyfriend was in a Louisville jail because he had stalked and raped her. She and her family were not notified when someone posted his bail. He hunted Mary down and fired seven shots, point blank, as she left work.

"Never again," the community vowed.

Within the year, county officials and software engineers had invented Victim Information & Notification Everyday or VINE – an automated system that notifies victims when an offender is released.



Today, more than 1,500 communities in the United States contract with Appriss Inc., the VINE parent company in Louisville.

In 1997, Montana purchased the first VINE system to track prison inmates in Department of Corrections custody. Since then, VINE has made more than 100,000 phone calls to Montana victims, informing them about prison transfers, parole hearings, sentence expirations, escapes and offender deaths. VINE registrations have increased tenfold to about 50 per month.

Anyone can call the Montana VINE at (800) 456-3076 to hear current information about a state prison inmate. Callers may stay on the line to register for automated custody status updates. The service is anonymous, free to users, confidential, and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

VINE does not track offenders on community supervision or in federal prisons and county jails. VINE also does not track juvenile offenders.

Victims can register on the Internet for phone and/or email notification at the national VINE website www.vinelink.com. They can also call the DOC Victim Information Specialist at (888) 223-6332 to register for VINE and to request a victim services packet. The packet includes forms for direct notification through the prisons and Board of Pardons and Parole, VINE and Victim-Offender Dialogue brochures, and information about the Crime Victims Advisory Council.

VINE is designed to help victims, but others who use the system for current inmate information include law enforcement, public information officers, victim advocates, probation and parole officers, other DOC staff, and offender family members.

The VINE system downloads current offender custody status data three times a day from ACIS, the department's offender tracking system. Timely, accurate data is critical because errors result in inaccurate notifications.

In the event of an escape or other emergency, prison staff can override the normal data download pattern and trigger an immediate VINE notification to victims. Leo LaSalle is the Information Technology specialist who manages VINE.

More information about VINE and other department victim services can be found by calling Sally Hilander at (406) 444-7461.

DOC, UM renew online training for P&P officers

The Department of Corrections has renewed its contract with the University of Montana to provide online training for probation and parole officers.

The initial round of training provided earlier this year addressed some of the most difficult type of offenders that officers encounter – the mentally ill, chemically dependent and sexually violent. UM reported that 189 officers participated in 3,024 hours of training. Almost 90 percent of the training focused on mental health, substance abuse and addiction.

The training program was developed by UM's School of Social Work.

Corrections Director Mike Ferriter called the training program a success that demonstrates innovative approaches to solving correctional needs can produce results.

"Not only does the program save money by eliminating the costs that occur when employees have to travel for training, but also the UM program proved it can improve our officers' up-to-date knowledge of issues important to their working relationships with offenders and victims," Ferriter said.

"That's why we decided to continue the online training," he added. "It works and saves taxpayers money and provides our staff with critical information."

Tim Conley, assistant professor in the School of Social Work and a developer of the training, said officers were surveyed before and after the training to de-

Budget director, staff tour DOC facilities

Officials from the governor's budget office spent five days this summer getting a firsthand look at some of Montana's correctional facilities.

Budget Director David Ewer toured



Doig

Treasure State Correctional Training Center, the lumber-processing plant and cannery at Montana State Prison, and the state Board of Pardons and Parole offices. He also attended a portion of a parole hearing conducted

at the prison by the board.

Ewer was accompanied by Brent Doig, the budget office's analyst for corrections, and Bob Anez, Department of Corrections communications director.

Doig was joined by Corrections Director Mike Ferriter and Montana State

Prison Warden Mike Mahoney for a two-day trip to north-central Montana. In Great Falls, the group toured the Youth Transition Center, probation and parole office, prerelease center and the Cascade County Regional Prison. The Crossroads Correctional Center in Shelby was the final stop.

The following week, Ewer, Ferriter and Doig made a two-day swing to eastern Montana. They visited the Montana Women's Prison, the new Passages programs for women, the probation and parole office, and the prerelease center for men in Billings. At Miles City, the trio met with senior staff and toured Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility.

This was the second time Ewer has toured correctional programs. In July 2006, he made a daylong visit to Montana State Prison and Montana Correctional Enterprises programs.

"The visits by me and my staff to corrections programs have provided me with a great opportunity to see in

person the facilities and operations that are the subject of funding decisions made in my office," Ewer said. "It's one thing to read or hear about these important programs, but there's no substitute for personal knowledge in trying to understand how they function."

Corrections Director Mike Ferriter said the time Ewer and Doig devoted to the tours demonstrates how critical this administration considers the corrections system.

"Our programs affect lives and public safety," he said. "It's impressive to see the level of interest that the budget staff has shown in learning how they operate and what's required to provide this crucial government service."



Ewer

Training

FROM Page 21

termine the benefit they received.

On a scale of one to six, with six representing maximum knowledge level on a subject, those taking the addictions courses improved their knowledge rating from 3.0 to 4.0. Those taking the mental health training experienced a similar improvement, from 2.5 to 3.9.

"This is the kind of collaboration that shows how government agencies can work together for the benefit of everyone," Ferriter said.

"We have better-trained officers at a lower cost to taxpayers by using existing resources in the university system. This is a valuable and productive partnership that deserves to continue."

Column

FROM Page 7

as it recognized our need to cope with the rapidly growing number of offenders being supervised in the communities. During the past fiscal year, the workload increased by an average of two offenders every day.

The addition of these officers will increase public safety by allowing greater supervision that improves enforcement of the restrictions imposed on offenders in the community. At the same time, that also can result in officers detecting more violations, issuing more revocations and nudging the recidivism rate a little higher.

We're also working with the Legislative Fiscal Division to develop a

"performance measurement" plan for the department. This will allow lawmakers to gauge the success of our new and existing programs.

And through all this, the process of preparing our budget request for the next Legislature will begin again soon.

The interim – this time between legislative sessions – is a true test of this agency's commitment, dedication and professionalism, as we carry out the wishes of Montanans as conveyed by our legislators.

This is a time of action, when we get our chance to prove the funding we have received can finance an improved corrections system that adequately and efficiently protects public safety, meets the needs of offenders and addresses concerns of victims.

The Training Times

Teach
Learn

New employees

The Staff Development and Training Bureau has added two training specialists to its staff.

Ted Ward has transferred from the director's office to be the information technology training specialist, replacing Rob Kersch. Ward will be responsible for all department computer training, assist with distance-learning initiatives, develop computer-based training strategies, and assist the Information Technology Bureau in training staff on the new offender management system.



Ward

Ward is the former administrative officer for the director. He also has worked for the Legal Services Bureau. Ward brings six years of correctional experience to the position and a high level of energy and enthusiasm to the bureau.

Rae Ann Forseth, the department recruiter for the past few years, is the new professional programs training specialist. She replaces Curt Swenson who was promoted to chief of the training bureau.

In her position, Forseth will teach upper-division courses, such as instructor development, cognitive principles and structuring, and motivational interviewing. She will also be responsible for research and development, technical assistance and curriculum development.

Forseth comes to the bureau with nearly 17 years of correctional experience and eight years of training experience. She began her correctional career as an administrative assistant at Montana State Prison, where she worked her way through the ranks of correctional officer and correctional supervisor. She also served eight years as the correctional basic program manager at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy, where she helped develop and coordinate the successful Junior Police Academy.

Along with her extensive experience in corrections, Forseth brings a broad range of training expertise to the bureau, from communication skills to defensive tactics.



Forseth

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Imagine 21: A fast track to change

By Lisa Hunter
Training Manager

Curt Swenson, chief of the State Development and Training Bureau, facilitated an "Investment to Excellence" Imagine 21 – Fast Track to Change training program in early summer at the Department of Corrections Training Center in Deer Lodge.

The program featured Lou Tice from the Pacific Institute in Seattle. Tice has been called one of the finest educators of our time. He is informative, enlightening and easy to listen to. He shares a wealth of solid information that helps "students" better understand why they think, feel and behave the way they do; how to increase their comfort level in new situations; how to improve their level of performance in any areas they choose; how to dramatically reduce their levels of stress, tension and anxiety; how to improve the quality of their relationships at home, work and wherever they go; and how to set and achieve goals that really make a difference in their lives.

Visit the DOC Intranet: http://mycor.cor.mt.gov/Human_Resources/Training/SchAnnForms.asp to find out when and where the next course is scheduled.

Comments from those who have taken the course testify to its usefulness and effectiveness.

"When I was asked what I expected to get out of this class I told people I have a

clean slate; I will go in with an open mind as I heard a lot of different opinions on this training," said Dave Garcia, training specialist at Montana State Prison. "This was the best decision I could have made. This course had a lot of information to absorb, but wow, this course was the most enlightening, get-your-mind-thinking class I have ever been to. The format, video, packet and after-course material was well put together and easy to follow.

"The course in my opinion has opened my mind to the way I talked to my family, co workers and friends," he



Imagine 21 instructor Curt Swenson uses a rubber band to talk about stretching comfort zones to reach goals. (Photo by Lisa Hunter)

added. "In the short time I have used some of the techniques that I choose to use, I believe it has made me a better, more confident person, in my personal and professional life. I choose not to attempt to describe the course to peo-

IMAGINE, Page 26

Training Schedule

October	Time	Course Title	Site Location
17	8am-12pm	Multi-Generational Workforce	DOC Training Center
17	8am-10pm	Staff Sexual Misconduct Refresher	MSP - Large Classroom
17	12pm-2pm	Staff Sexual Misconduct Refresher	MSP - Large Classroom
29-30	8am-5pm	PREA T4T Instructor Class	Alternatives Inc - Billings
29-30	8am-5pm	Imagine 21 (Phase II)	DOC Training Center
November	Time	Course Title	Site Location
7-8	8am-5pm	PREA T4T Instructor	DOC Training Center
8	6am-10am	Multi Generational Workforce	MSP - Large Classroom
13	10am-12pm	Staff Sexual Misconduct Refresher	MSP - Large Classroom
13	2pm-4pm	Staff Sexual Misconduct Refresher	MSP - Large Classroom
20	2pm-4pm	Staff Sexual Misconduct Refresher	MSP - Large Classroom
26-28	8am-5pm	Imagine 21 (Phase I)	DOC Training Center
29-30	8am-5pm	Imagine 21 (Phase II)	DOC Training Center
December	Time	Course Title	Site Location
10-14	8am-5pm	Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification Course	DOC Training Center

NIC class helps train supervisors

By Lisa Hunter
Training Manager

The Department of Corrections Training Center in Deer Lodge hosted the National Institute of Corrections supervisor training course in June.

Instructors Wayne Ternes, Karen Holland and Tim Foss are associated with the "region field coordinators initiative" of the NIC, representing the western region. The three have been working vigorously on this program for the past year.

The program offered a complete evaluation on supervisor skills; an internal glance at what affects leadership decisions; how to use problem-solving approaches to leadership; how to implement mindful actions, choices and behaviors; how to communicate effectively as a leader; and how to build team morale through effective supervision and evaluation.

This program also was offered at the Montana Women's Prison in Billings in August.

Those taking the course praised its effectiveness.



Participants in the National Institute of Corrections course for supervisors get involved in a group exercise. (Photo by Lisa Hunter)

"One of the best things about this training is how we, as supervisors, interacted with other supervisors that we normally don't interact with," said Jim Salmonsens, warehouse manager at Montana State Prison. "It's always great during these training sessions to speak with other supervisors about issues that they have and how they handle their situation. The instructors were very knowledgeable and very personable and made the training fun."

Jim Mason, who was American Indian liaison for the department at the time of the class, said, "Training was educational in learning how to solicit input from those we supervise. Making the working relationship more effectual for both the subordinate and the supervisor helps productivity."

Imagine

FROM Page 25

ple as I don't believe I can. But I would highly recommend it to anyone who would like a different approach to how they view the big picture, live and work."

Billie Reich, MSP classification and grievance officer, had a similar view: "I found that the training was wonderful. The information made me look deep into my thoughts, feelings and work expectations. I found that the little things that make me feel out of sorts are the things that I should be cherishing. I can not say enough about Curt and his ability as a trainer. He was able to get the group motivated and

interested in the training. Anyway, as you can tell I believe this training was the best I have gone to in along time."

"In a word – 'awesome,'" was the reaction from John Williams, regional administrator for probation and parole in Billings. "This training not only reveals the potential we all have inside, it gives a person the tools and techniques to unleash that potential. It was a very motivating and inspiring training and would recommend the training to all department staff."

"Whether it's your career, your family life or the way you think about yourself, it gives you great tools to improve your life," said Ted Ward, former administrative officer in the director's office.



Curt Swenson, training bureau chief, conducts an Imagine 21 training class. (Photo by Lisa Hunter)

Renowned firearms trainer offers course



Valerie Chestnut, a Missoula probation and parole officer, poses with her "hole-in-one" target. (Photos by Wayne Ternes)

Jim Gregg, a nationally known firearms instructor, brought his class to Montana State Prison for two days in July.

Gregg has more than 35 years of experience providing training in Point-Shooting Method to in excess of 12,500 law enforcement officers.

During the course offered in Montana this past summer, students shot in daylight and darkness from a variety of positions without using the sights on their firearms.

The highlight of the class was the "hole-in-one" competition. Participants are inaugurated into the Hole-in-One Club when they are able to place five shots all touching each other on the steel target from 15 feet without using the sights.

Gregg commented that this was an exemplary class as all students made the club on the first day of training. You can find more information about the Jim Gregg method at www.jimgregg.net.

SWAT, negotiation teams train together

August 13-17 was a week of firsts for several Department of Corrections staff.

Previously, employees selected to be crisis negotiators traveled to Wyoming for the basic training class. However, Don May, with help from Tom Bolton, Steve Redfern, Michelle Steyh and Anita Larner, coordinated and conducted the first crisis negotiation training class to be held at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy under the direction of the department.

Employees from men's and women's prison, Dawson County Regional Prison, Treasure State Correctional Training Center, Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility and Gallatin County sheriff's department participated in their first week-long, 68-hour intensive training program to become crisis negotiators.

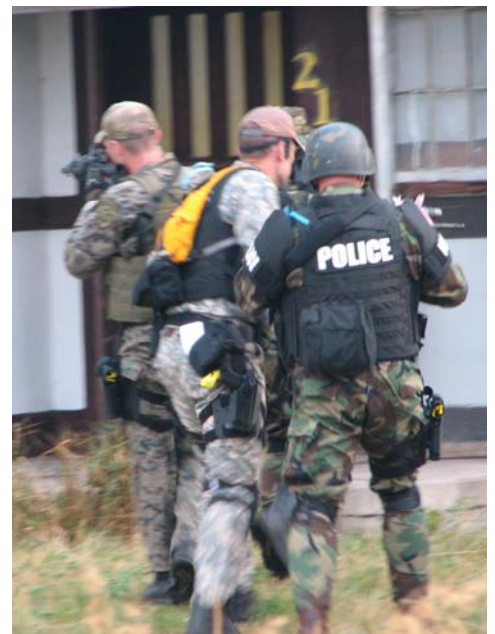
The training was long, tense and stressful, consisting of classroom instruction and various scenarios outside of the classroom. Scenarios included getting a phone to the hostage takers, negotiation barricade situations, and

face-to-face negotiations dealing with suicidal individuals.

The SWAT basic class also was undergoing a week-long, physically intense training program. The ultimate test for both classes came in when the groups trained together, the first time that has been done in a basic course. The crisis negotiation team was required to negotiate the freedom of six to 10 hostages, while the SWAT team surrounded the buildings, took negotiated items to the hostage takers and later secured the buildings.

After approximately five hours, the negotiators were able to negotiate the freedom of all hostages and convince the hostage takers to come out of the building in the first scenario. The SWAT team followed up by taking control of the hostages and hostage takers at gunpoint, and following the tactics they learned in their training. In the second scenario, the SWAT team had to use gas, forcing the hostage takers out of the building after a four-hour standoff.

The training and honing of skills paid off in each scenario, as both teams developed a better understanding of each team's purpose as well as the benefits each team can contribute to public and facility safety.



Members of the SWAT training team approach a house.

Comings

EDITOR'S NOTE: These lists of new and departing employees is for the period from June 22, 2007 through Sept. 14, 2007, based on personnel records in the central office. If you notice any errors or omissions, please call the *Signpost* editor at (406) 444-0409, or e-mail him at banez@mt.gov.

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Leslie Walsted

Montana Women's Prison

Heather Ledger
Gerry Wagner

Pine Hills

Jarrold Cain
Nora Drew
Dione Ferris
Matthew Kiddie
Marjorie Poffenberger
Tanner Schweigert
Julie Straub
Kathy Strub
Mark Teeters

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Landon Lamb, Helena

Riverside

Candace Baker
Raymond Brown
Nicholas Burckhard
Cliff Irwin
Michael Johnson
Abraham Moore
Arnold Salcido

Treasure State

Adam Cole
Chad Prowse
Doug Ross
Adam Sackman

Youth Transition Center

Samantha Leathers

Goings

Daniel Allen
James Big Horn
Christy Brewer
Thomas Brown
Rebecca Carroll
Allison Cochrell
Sharlie Concoran
Zane Cozby
Renzle Crain
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Rodney Williams



Montana Department of Corrections Mission

The Montana Department of Corrections enhances public safety, promotes positive change in offender behavior, reintegrates offenders into the community and supports victims of crime.

Next Signpost Deadline

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